

The Crucible, Act II, by Arthur Miller**Literary Analysis: Allusion**

An **allusion** is a reference to some well-known thing or idea. In our society, for example, people often allude to sports, phenomena: “This project is the Super Bowl for us.” Common allusions often take their reference from the surrounding society, so it’s little wonder that the Salem Puritans allude to their religion as knowledgeably and as frequently as we allude to sports.

DIRECTIONS: Use a dictionary or other reference work to explain the italicized allusion in each of the following items.

1. At the beginning of Act II, a kind of *cold war* exists between John and Elizabeth because of past events.

2. Although an honest and strong man, John Proctor has an *Achilles heel*—his relationship to Abigail.

3. Something between a *siren* and a *harpy*, Abigail proves to be Proctor’s undoing.

4. Reverend Hale brings an *ivory-tower* approach to his examination that ill fits the world he finds.

5. With the *sword of Damocles* above his head, Proctor flusters and cannot remember the Ten Commandments.
